THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN OVERCOMING CHALLENGES IN LEARNING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping language education, particularly in improving English speaking skills. This study investigates how AI-powered tools, such as Duolingo, ELSA Speak, and ChatGPT, help learners overcome common challenges, including pronunciation difficulties, lack of speaking opportunities, and low confidence. Using a mixed-method approach, data was collected through surveys and interviews with users and educators. The findings show that AI provides personalized feedback, real-time pronunciation corrections, and simulated conversational practice in non-judgmental environments. These features enhance learners' fluency and confidence, while also breaking barriers of time and accessibility. For instance, speech recognition technologies allow learners to practice and receive immediate feedback, fostering self-paced improvement. Despite these advantages, the study highlights limitations. AI lacks emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, and the nuanced understanding that human instructors offer. Additionally, AI feedback can occasionally be inaccurate or overly simplistic, underscoring the importance of integrating AI with traditional teaching methods. This research concludes that while AI is a powerful supplementary resource for language learning, it cannot entirely replace human instructors. To maximize its potential, developers should focus on enhancing the contextual understanding and cultural relevance of AI systems. This study contributes to the growing exploration of technology-enhanced learning and demonstrates how AI can support diverse learners in mastering English speaking skills.

INTRODUCTION

Many facets of education, especially language learning, have been significantly impacted by artificial intelligence (AI). Artificial intelligence (AI) tools provide innovative methods to get over difficulties to learning to speak English, like incorrect pronunciation, a lack of practice chances, and low learner confidence. Madhavi et al. (2023) claim that the integration of AI and ICT tools has significantly improved the educational process by allowing for

individualized and flexible speaking skill development pathways. Through real-time feedback and conversational simulations, artificial intelligence (AI) platforms are being used more and more in Malaysian higher education to help students become more effective speakers (Sukumaran & Khair, 2024). Research by Duong and Suppasetseree (2024) shows that AI voice chatbots work to help Vietnamese students become more effective and confident speakers. Similar to this, Takahashi (2020) showed how these technologies can be modified for local linguistic contexts by developing an AI-driven e-learning platform to meet the conversational needs of Japanese learners. Additionally, programs like AI speech evaluation systems and ELSA Speak give students instant feedback on their pronunciation, boosting independent practice and removing conventional learning barriers (Zou et al., 2024; Ikram & Iness, 2024).

Even if these technologies have many advantages, they still have limitations such a lack of cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence (Habib et al., 2019). Innovative strategies, such as generative AI chatbots, have been investigated to close these gaps and promote interactive and cooperative learning settings (Tai & Chen, 2024). These advancements illustrate how AI has the potential to revolutionize the way that English-speaking abilities are taught and learned. Building on this framework, the current study explores how AI-powered resources like ChatGPT, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak can help people become more fluent in English. It looks at their advantages, disadvantages, and effects on both formal and informal language learning environments.

RESEARCH METHODS

Using a qualitative research approach, this study investigated how Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies can improve English speaking abilities through semi-structured interviews. The approach was selected in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, viewpoints, and difficulties that participants had when utilizing AI-powered programs like ChatGPT, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study's findings suggest that while using AI to improve English speaking abilities has many benefits there are limitations as well. For some students, artificial intelligence (AI) applications like ChatGPT, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak are quite helpful since they give flexible practice options and feedback. But there are issues with Duolingo's voice component, which often gives irregular results, and the ELSA Speak subscription costs, which some users

find expensive.AI is typically used by learners to improve their pronunciation, improve their vocabulary, and get feedback and recommendations for improving their English. Although there is some doubt about AI's ability to correctly translate conversational settings or particular accents, the majority of people find the feedback to be beneficial.

The findings agree with previous studies highlighting the potential and limitations of AI tools for improving English speaking abilities. According to Madhavi et al. (2023), artificial intelligence (AI) technologies like Duolingo and ELSA Speak provide efficient ways to enhance speaking abilities, especially pronunciation. Similarly, Duong and Suppasetseree (2024) discovered that by offering real-time practice and feedback, AI chatbots greatly enhance Vietnamese students' speaking abilities. Sukumaran and Khair (2024) emphasized the need for more consistent and open available AI tools in Malaysian higher education, and the difficulties this study found such as inconsistent speech recognition and expensive premium features are in line with their findings. Furthermore, learners' doubts regarding the contextual accuracy of AI-generated feedback were observed by Zou et al. (2024), which is consistent with the results of this study on AI's limits in comprehending conversational context.

The findings of Arofat (2024), who emphasized that AI can't replicate the dynamic interaction provided by human instructors, also mirror the lack of emotional engagement that students expressed. In the meantime, Dennis (2024) suggested enhancing AI's speech recognition capabilities to further improve speaking and pronunciation. Shin (2021), who suggested that adding AI into teaching models could encourage more participatory and successful learning experiences, is in line with learners' optimism over future AI breakthroughs. In order to overcome present limitations Nguyen and Pham (2024) also recommended that future AI tools concentrate on a variety of accents and realistic conversational circumstances.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study comes to the conclusion that by giving adaptability, real-time feedback, and chances for independent practice, artificial intelligence (AI) applications like ChatGPT, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak greatly enhance learners' English speaking abilities. However, issues including inconsistent feedback accuracy, low emotional engagement, and expensive subscription charges are still present.Although AI is a useful in addition, it cannot completely replace the individualized instruction and dynamic engagement that come from working with human teachers. Developers can improve AI tools' contextual awareness and feedback accuracy in order to overcome these limitations, particularly when it comes to supporting a range of

languages and conversational settings. The learner experience would be enhanced by adding elements that mimic emotionally compelling and genuine dialogue. Furthermore, lowering the cost of AI platform subscriptions or providing free access to premium abilities could help make these technologies more freely available. To maximize the benefits of both methods, educational institutions are urged to use AI tools with conventional language instruction. The advantages of this technology in the classroom could also be maximized by offering professional development programs that enable teachers to successfully integrate AI tools into their lesson plans. AI has the potential to become a key tool in English language instruction with these developments and integrations, ensuring its effectiveness and inclusivity.

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